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THREE "BEFORE AMTRAK" SLIDE SETS now available: "In the East" ($5.00, 25 slides) covers the IC to the D&H and SCL; "In the West" ($5.00, 25 slides) covers the C&NW and GM&O to the SP; "In the Pacific Northwest" ($6.00, 30 slides) covers all Oregon and Washington varnish. Coverage is 1964-71 period. Detailed list of 10 sets and sample slide for 25¢ from Northwest Rail Images, 4891 Donald Street, Eugene, Oregon 97405.

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ADVERTISING RATES FOR RAIL TRAVEL NEWSLETTER: Express ads (now 80 characters and spaces per line), up to 3 lines for $1 (minimum); additional lines 35¢ each, 3 for $1. Display ads: full page $10, half page $6, quarter page $3.50. Write: MESSAGE MEDIA, Dept. RTN, Box 9007, Berkeley, Calif. 94709.

RAIL TRAVEL newsletter

25¢

VOL. 2 NO. 16
AUGUST 21, 1972
#42

"...TO DIE LIKE THIS IN NEEDLES, CALIFORNIA, WITH NO AIR CONDITIONING?"

Amtrak's Mexican Service

ON THE COVER:

A fantasy on Steve Farrar's trip to the West Coast, described in EAST COAST REPORT, in this issue.

QUOTES OF THE WEEK***

"We have the technology and brains to build a modern rail passenger system. We should be finding progressive and permanent ways to help Amtrak grow stronger if it is to expand and accommodate travelers in this increasingly-mobile society. What is required is leadership...by railroad presidents...by the heads of rail labor unions... by the policy makers at Amtrak...and by the Congress. But in the end analysis, leadership must begin with the Office of the President. And unless it is forthcoming, I fear that Amtrak will be a failure and suffer an early death."

--Joseph Vranich, Executive Director of National Association of Railroad Passengers, in speech to the California Association of Railroad Passengers, August 22 and 30.

"I hope Amtrak is trying. I hope they will try harder on the PANAMA LIMITED. In Memphis, our car porter had to service his own car with water. Lord knows where the station crew was. The PANAMA used to be one of the best streamliners in the nation. Now it's being carelessly run."

--Richard Allin in the Arkansas Gazette, August 30

"...we got there safe and sound, rested and relaxed. And I certainly recommend the Amtrak concept, particularly to the young, who are always looking for something new and different. It's a wonder in this aviation age that somebody didn't dream up the concept long ago. One of these days, it's bound to get off the ground."

--Art Hoppe in the San Francisco Chronicle, September 4

"Ironically, Penn Station resembles one of the country's better airport lobbies. Nonetheless, we overheard numerous fugitives from the NATIONAL LIMITED vowing 'never again' as they shoved their baggage up the ramp in supermarket carts that have, for the most part, supplanted red caps. Score a hefty net loss here for Amtrak popularity."

--James Bassett in front page Los Angeles Times article, August 28

If you are one of the many new subscribers who have joined us this summer, please let us explain our publication schedule, since you may be justifiably confused. Normally, each twice-monthly issue of RTN has been appearing (going into the mail) about a week or so after the date on the cover. This summer we have fallen behind schedule due to vacations and moving our office. Since most issues mailed have no postmark, check the "projected mailing date" at the bottom of page 2. This gives our best estimate as the issue goes to press about when it will be mailed, and is usually pretty accurate. In any case, each issue's news is about 48 hours old when the issue is mailed first class to you. We hope you like RTN.

Rail Travel Newsletter, Vol. 2, No. 16 (Whole No. 42), August 21, 1972
Projected mailing date for this issue: September 12

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STAFF: James Russell, Editor; Paul Rayton, Editor at Large; Richard Tower, Research Editor; Steve Farrar, East Coast Editor; Doug Ellis, East Coast Photographer.**

AMTRAK SERVICE TO MONTREAL TO BEGIN SEPTEMBER 29

Amtrak finally decided its New York-Montreal route and announced Aug. 24 that the train will begin running Sept. 29 over the route of the former MONTREALER, from Washington and New York via the Connecticut River Valley. In so doing, Amtrak restores rail service to two states, Vermont and New Hampshire, not previously represented in the Amtrak nationwide system. The alternate route under serious consideration had been the New York/Albany route using D&H tracks. Amtrak said that the 1.2 million larger population along the chosen route, predicted revenues of almost double those of the D&H route, and "a higher potential for traffic growth" were the main reasons for its choice. The other route was shorter and had a running time 3 hours faster, but required running the train out of NY's Grand Central Station, making an across-town traffic change necessary.

The train will run overnight, leaving Washington 5:05pm, NY 9:10pm, arriving in White River Junction 5:05am, Montpelier 6:40am, Waterbury 7:05am, Essex Junction 7:35am, Montreal 10:35am. Southbound: lv Montreal 6:25pm, Essex Junction 9:25pm, Waterbury 9:55pm, Montpelier Junction 10:20pm, White River Junction 11:50pm, arrive New York 7:30am, Washington 12 noon. The CONNECTICUT YANKEE presently leaves Washington northbound on the same schedule, so presumably the two trains will be consolidated.

The Vermont Association of Railroad Passengers (affiliated with NARP) was jubilant over the choice, and Editor George Lerrigo of the VARP newsletter said the Vermont passenger group plans to paint some stations and arrange for taxi and telephone facilities and attractive passenger environments along the route. VARP's September newsletter will contain important information, and can be requested from: Polygraphic Lane, N. Bennington, VT 05257.

PACIFIC COAST AUTO-CARRYING AMTRAK TRAINS? NARP BLASTS SP OPPOSITION

Amtrak has been negotiating to begin an auto-train type of operation on the West Coast, over the COAST STARLIGHT route, it was revealed in August. Railway Age magazine first mentioned the fact, and NARP's Joseph Vranich, speaking in San Francisco August 30, said that Southern Pacific is firmly opposed to the innovation, claiming that it would interfere with its Auto-Trans service by which it hauls cars as freight to the East, and that a California law prohibits freight cars behind passenger cars. Vranich said that SP and Amtrak have agreed to submit the matter to binding arbitration.

Vranich also struck out at what he called SP "sabotage" of Amtrak, quoting on-time performance figures on SP lines published in the last issue of RTN. Vranich called for vastly expanded rail service between California points, but said that the likelihood of such service is slim "if SP continues doing such a miserable job providing service for Amtrak."

Vranich spoke also in Los Angeles August 22. Copies of his prepared text, "Amtrak--Problems and Prospects," can be obtained by sending a stamped envelope to National Association of Railroad Passengers, 417 New Jersey Ave., S.E., Washington DC 20003.

SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR DERAILS

Amtrak train 5, the SF ZEPHYR, suffered a derailment in the early morning of Sept. 4 near Inland, Nebraska, 9 miles from Hastings on BN rails. Ten cars of the 14-car train left the tracks, injuring 25-30 people, only two of whom required hospitalization (broken arm and dislocated shoulder). Cause of the accident was not reported. Among the damaged cars was SP dome lounge 3603, one of two that had been refurbished and painted in Amtrak's color scheme. The train limped into Oakland about 8 hours late, being further delayed by SP engine failure in Nevada. An Amtrak (ex-C&O) square-end observation diner-lounge (used as a lounge) currently running on the COAST DAYLIGHT was pressed into service to replace the dome on later runs. After the wreck, spare cars were cut in at Denver to bring passengers by rail to their destination

SURVEY SHOWS INCREASING PASSENGER TRAIN SUPPORT

A study based on 1200 questionnaires given rail passengers in the Pacific Northwest and on the West Coast by Prof. Richard L. Day of the University of Idaho has shown that some previous assumptions of transportation planners were incorrect. For example, rail travelers make much longer trips than had been previously believed. On the COAST STARLIGHT, EMPIRE BUILDER, and NORTH COAST HIAWATHA he found that riders make average journeys of about 1250 miles. Of the passengers contacted, 90% felt that more government financial support for passenger trains should be given. Ridership showed a big spurt from February to April to June, more than seasonal expectations. Said Day: "Passenger loadings, which had been rising throughout the spring, took a final grand spurt to reach the carrying capacity of the train almost immediately" when Amtrak announced fare cuts in June. Passengers complained about the lateness of the STARLIGHT and its tri-weekly schedule, in addition to malfunctioning equipment, rough track and long waits for meal service. "Undoubtedly the most serious problem of all since early June has been the great difficulty in obtaining reservations, especially in sleeping cars. Unquestionably, much business has been lost because people have not been able to obtain responses within reasonable time periods..."

AMTRAK GRABS RAIL TRAVEL NEWSLETTER EDITOR

RTN has lost a staff member, but Amtrak has gained a good man for its planning department. Our Research Editor, Richard Tower, has taken a job with Amtrak in its Washington office effective Sept. 1. Rich graduated last June from the University of California at Berkeley with a degree in the History of Transportation. We know he will be an asset to NRPC, but we reluctantly remove his name from our list of staff starting with the next issue. Now, Rich, about that LARK, San Joaquin Valley train, etc., etc... Another well-known Bay Area railfan left about the same time. George Drury, a contributor to RTN, has gone into the employ of Kalmbach Publications, publishers of Trains Magazine and numerous books on railroading.

AMTRAK NOW CARRYING MAIL FROM CHICAGO TO SEATTLE

On Sept. 1 Amtrak began hauling mail on the EMPIRE BUILDER over its entire route. Previously it had carried letters only between Chicago and Minot. Amtrak estimated that it will earn at least $450,000 per year from the service. It will provide connections with the mail facilities of the BROADWAY LIMITED and the FLORIDIAN. While trucked mail required 3 days for the route and stops were made at fewer points, the train will take only 2 days and make many more stops.

East Coast Report

BY STEVE FARRAR

AMTRAKKING WEST

I hadn't taken a major rail trip since September 1971, so I was anxious to go West and learn what Amtrak had accomplished in a year. So, on September 1 I boarded the northbound Amtrak/RF&P SILVER STAR at Richmond, VA, intent on a plasant vacation --seeing portions of the nation that were new to me--by train.

Boarding my SCL coach, I found my reserved seat occupied, so I went back outside to the porter. He gave me a new seat number, which also proved to be occupied. The car was stuffy anyway, so I gave up and spent most of the ride in the vestibules, the lounge and the diner. Our 13-car train was heavily loaded, and the RF&P train crew wore Amtrak uniforms which they had received about two weeks before. They were the only crew to be seen in Amtrak uniforms during the entire trip.

We ran past a half-dozen stunned passengers at the non-agency flag stop at Quantico, then backed up to pick them up. We made a double stop in Alexandria and paused because of track repair at the south end of the Potomac River bridge, resulting in a 13-minute late arrival in Washington.

The situation improved somewhat on the Washington-Harrisburg section of the NATIONAL LIMITED. The train had 2 coaches instead of the usual one (SCL & PC), and the air conditioning was functioning better than on most of the cars on the STAR. Both coaches were comfortably filled, and the passengers were content. We passed the eastbound NATIONAL, which was running some 2 hours late and looking ridiculous with a huge GG1 and one coach. We arrived at Harrisburg 12 minutes late due to flood-caused slow orders.

The Harrisburg station was a beehive of activity. An incessant stream of freight trains passed by, rerouted because of a damaged bridge. The rickety station tracks which had not been ripped out were being used as passenger running tracks or storage for electric and diesel freight locomotives and mail containers. Upstairs, several hundred passengers milled around, waiting for the NATIONAL, the 5:25pm Philadelphia Silverliner and various intercity and commuter buses.

The NATIONAL LIMITED, which had left New York about a half-hour late, finally showed up, with a GG1, ATSF baggage (checked baggage service just recently added), Amtrak sleeper, UP sleeper and coach to Los Angeles, another Amtrak coach, PC diner, 3 Amtrak coaches, and an ACL coach. The 2 coaches from Washington were cut in behind the diner, and the train, jammed with passengers, left Harrisburg about 45 minutes late. A man was aboard to work on the air conditioning of the ACL coach. I waited in line 1½ hours while the PC crew lackadaisically served dinner. I was to observe Santa Fe crews two days later hustling much faster with nobody waiting in line.

Since I was going to Los Angeles, the conductor let me transfer to the thru coach, a legrest car just refurbished by Amtrak. The car had wall-to-wall carpeting and the quiet and comfort were sublime. I don't remember anything from Latrobe, PA, to Indianapolis, except for briefly waking up at Columbus--we had to back into the station because some freight cars were blocking the approach from the east. At Indianapolis two NP RDC's sat in the station, purpose unknown. The last of the 4 rear coaches from New York was removed at Indianapolis; the other 3 must have been taken off at Pittsburgh.

Throughout the day, the train continued to get later. There were innumerable times when the train would slow to a crawl or come to a complete stop for a minute or so. Approaching St. Louis, the conductor came thru and announced that we would be bused from St. Louis to Kansas City because of a freight wreck on the MoPac at Jefferson City. PC finally dragged the train into St. Louis 2 hours, 45 minutes late. The cavernous trainshed of St. Louis Union Station was so dark and empty that it sent chills down my spine. There was not one piece of rolling stock in the entire station--only rusted, crumbling tracks and places where tracks used to be.

Along with 137 other infuriated sardines, I boarded one of three 46-passenger buses and headed for Kansas City. The two express buses reached Kansas City at 6pm and found the westbound CHIEF waiting. The third bus had to work local stops and must have gotten lost. Finally, at 8:55 pm, 3 hours 40 minutes late, the CHIEF hit the Santa Fe trail. No. 19 had 4 F units, baggage (handling mail Chicago-Albuquerque), 2 hi-level coaches, lunch counter car, diner, BN slumbercoach, Amtrak sleeper, Amtrak coach, SP sleeper, and Santa Fe business car 38 with the general manager aboard. Let it be said that the service was traditional Santa Fe. The employees displayed a brand of courtesy unknown on the Penn Central. And who but the Santa Fe has large signs along the right of way pointing out passes, mountains and Indian pueblos? The train was washed at Albuquerque. During the break a wealthy-looking gentleman stormed into the station and said, "I don't like this train. It doesn't have a lounge car. If you can't get me that bedroom on the SUPER CHIEF, then I'm going to the airport." Other than that, the passengers seemed happy. And by Needles, CA, Santa Fe had made up almost an hour even with the general manager back there watching his speedometer.

At Needles, the passengers were informed that a bridge had washed out ahead and that there would be a few hours delay with probable arrival in Los Angeles of 7am or later. After the CHIEF had been sitting in Needles about an hour, the air conditioning failed in the Amtrak coach, which held most of the "thru" passengers off the NATIONAL. Bear in mind that these people had been bused from St. Louis to Kansas City, had been traveling more than 3 hours late, had just been told that the bridge is out ahead--and now, for their additional traveling pleasure--the batteries on their coach have died in Needles, CA, the hottest place on the desert. Some passengers went to the bus station only to learn that no buses were running to L.A. because the Interstate highway was washed out too. Finally, after 10:30pm, the CHIEF was highballing again. It was delayed about an hour at the bridge repair site, but made up another half hour after that, arriving L.A. at 5:55am, instead of 11:35pm. The running time was reminiscent of that of Santa Fe No. 23, a pathetic pre-Amtrak schedule.

It was left to the COAST DAYLIGHT to redeem a trip that had been half pleasure and half disaster. At Los Angeles I learned that the train was now a reserved-seater, and had been since June, but I guess nobody told Amtrak in Richmond, VA. The lady said the train had been sold out for weeks, but she gave me a car assignment anyway. No. 13 had 2 SP SDP45 engines, Santa Fe baggage, Santa Fe coach, Amtrak coach, SP diner, Amtrak coach, SP Shasta Daylight coach, and an Amtrak (ex-SCL) observation. One noticeable improvement was the fact that the train received numerous passengers from the SAN DIEGAN and the SUPER CHIEF. SP had (pre-Amtrak) purposely scheduled the DAYLIGHT to leave Los Angeles before the arrival of these trains.

The COAST DAYLIGHT was pure pleasure all the way from Los Angeles to Oakland.

(Continued on page 11)

Mixed Train of Thoughts

JOE VRANICH'S sleeping car caught fire on the COAST STARLIGHT out of Seattle during his West Coast trip in August, and the porter didn't know how to stop the train. No one could open the glassed-in fire extinguisher box at first, and at Portland Joe could hardly find someone to inspect the car before proceeding. But it was pronounced O.K. and continued on, after which the power went out on it..... STEVE FARRAR'S trip to Berkeley (see EAST COAST REPORT) included just about everything that could go wrong. When he left on his return trip on the SF ZEPHYR he managed to get the consist that had derailed a few days before and had substitute cars in it. Then the train was delayed starting 45 minutes when an elderly lady died in one Amtrak coach after finding her seat. We're waiting to hear what else happened on the way back to Virginia..... PAUL RAYTON (hey! what's with all this name-dropping?) is returning from Canada. He writes: "meet me at the train as we go through and bring a pound of Top Dog's Kosher hot dogs. You may have to board the train to wake us." Paul's not accustomed to early hours, but if he thinks we are he'll have to come back and buy his own hot dogs..... BRITISH RAIL is in "deep financial trouble," reports the Times of London (Aug. 3), and the options are cutting back the system or increasing state support. The heart of the problem, says the Times, likes in too many employees; but unions won't let them be cut back. Unions will allow only line closures, and these don't help. Complete automation for the future is talked about, but what will probably occur is increased government support.....

* * *

AMTRAK WON its court case, at least temporarily, against the state of Oklanoma Sept. 8 when a federal judge decided that Amtrak can serve liquor on its trains running thru the state, just as the airlines do. The state of Kansas case is not yet decided..... BART ASKED the Calif. Public Utilities Commission on the eve of opening day to allow faster train speeds than 25mph in manual control, since automatic control is still a bit uncertain. But the PUC was shocked at such a request and said no..... THINGS ARE improving quite a bit at the Oakland Amtrak depot with the recent addition of a Station Master (there had never been one under Amtrak before). This man really hustles and is worth a thousand ordinary railroad employees. It's really a pleasure to see him stir up that previously-missing sense of urgency, and he looks as if he wants to see Amtrak succeed. Now if Oakland could only get an automated switchboard, maybe someone could get through to the ticket people occasionally. The phone, in our experience, either is busy or rings about 100 times (we kid you not!) before you get an answer--if you're lucky..... FEDERAL RAILROAD Administration, of the DOT, announced Aug. 15 regulations under which Amtrak may use its federally-approved $170 million plus $50 million in loan guarantees: for operation of Amtrak; advertising and improving reservation systems; servicing and repair of equipment; research & development; development of new equipment; provision of fixed facilities for lines in the system over which no thru trains were being run as of Oct. 30, 1970; purchase or lease of equipment; and other purposes..... RELOCATION OF San Clemente SAN DIEGAN tracks was opposed in a 161-signature petition given a state assemblyman early in August..... MEXICOACH BUS now leaves San Diego Amtrak station and goes nonstop to Tijuana, Mexico 5 times daily. Round trip $3.60, kids 5-12 half fare..... WHITE HOUSE is backing the Muskie-Cooper bill to give $800 million from the Interstate highway trust fund for use with mass transit.....

AMTRAK'S MEXICAN SERVICE -- RETURN OF THE TEXAS EAGLE

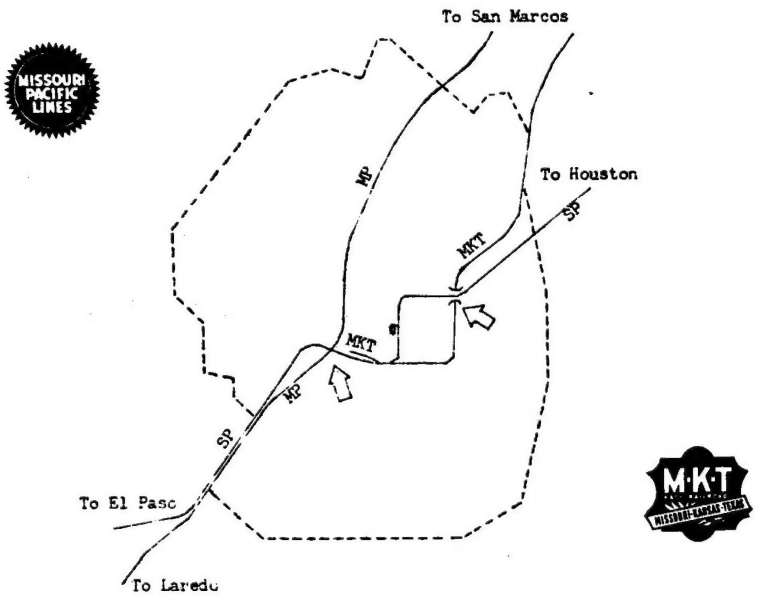
by Alfred E. Ehm

Amtrak's preparations for service to Mexico thru San Antonio, TX, began in earnest August 15 when Amtrak's chief operations officer and staff members flew into South Texas for an inspection of the route. After conferring with officials of the Mexican National Railways, the party traveled by rail-limousine from Laredo to San Antonio and on to Austin and Temple. The 3-day visit was not announced by Amtrak, and the local news media consequently did not report the event.

Compared to the problem of reinstating the PACIFIC INTERNATIONAL to Canada, the new train is a project fraught with difficulties. The relatively short route from Nuevo Laredo to Temple, 300 miles, involves not only the need for some track and signalling work and the reestablishment of station services where none have existed for many years, but also the jurisdictional problem of having to run a train over the right-of-way of four different companies.

The route of the new train will probably not differ much from the former TEXAS EAGLE. The train will again travel mainly over MoPac rails. The major change will occur in San Antonio, where the train will be diverted into the SP station and thence northward onto MKT and MoPac rails.

As the adjoining map shows, the train will enter the city from the southwest over MP, turn into the SP's double track mainline and then travel into the SP

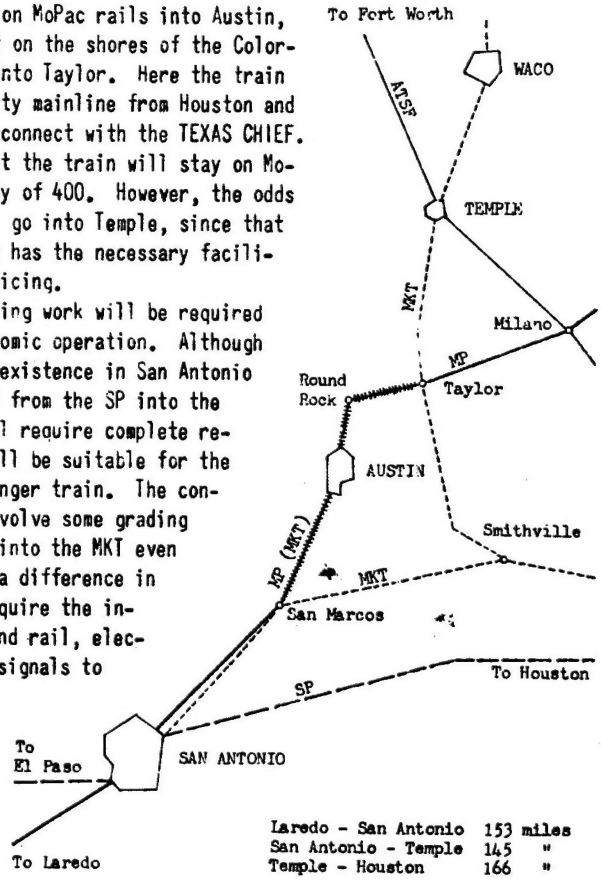


depot. Leaving the station, the train will continue on SP rails to the east end of the freight yards and then turn northward into the Katy line. It will remain on Katy rails into San Marcos (home of LBJ's alma mater) and then switch onto MP rails again. (The Katy has its own line from San Marcos to Granger, a few miles north of Taylor, but obtained trackage rights over the MP in 1965.)

The train will travel on MoPac rails into Austin, stop at the former MP depot on the shores of the Colorado, and then continue on into Taylor. Here the train will turn north into the Katy mainline from Houston and continue on into Temple to connect with the TEXAS CHIEF.

There is some talk that the train will stay on MoPac into Milano, a community of 400. However, the odds are that the new train will go into Temple, since that route is shorter and Temple has the necessary facilities for switching and servicing.

Some track and signalling work will be required to assure reliable and economic operation. Although connections are already in existence in San Antonio from the MP into the SP and from the SP into the Katy, these connections will require complete reconstruction before they will be suitable for the operation of a modern passenger train. The connection into the SP will involve some grading and drainage work, the one into the MKT even heavier grading because of a difference in elevation, and both will require the installation of new roadbed and rail, electric switches and numerous signals to assure safe operation.



Major rebuilding will be required in the SP's San Antonio station, although Amtrak may postpone this project. This trackwork is essentially unchanged since the early 1940s and has fallen into total disrepair. At present two station tracks and two stubs branch off on the west side of the mainline. All crossovers are hand-operated and require the presence of a switch crew of 3 men which comes down from the freight yard in a switcher to guide the thrice-weekly SUNSET LIMITED onto the single platform track and thence back onto the mainline--a small matter of 4 to 8 man-hours per train.

The one useable passenger track--track 2, since track 1 was torn out years ago--had deteriorated to such a degree that the local SP management was forced to take the drastic action of replacing the ties last April. With the SUNSET again carrying a dozen cars and 3 E units, a derailment was inevitable.

In the interest of rationalization it is apparent that Amtrak will need to completely reconstruct this station's trackwork--especially if it is to serve two pairs of daily trains. Such a project would include removal of the existing trackwork and subgrade, installation of adequate drainage facilities, grading, construction of a concrete service platform, and installation of new ballasted track, electric switches and required signals. Amtrak may also want to reinstall track 1, since this track, the one closest to the building, would be protected by the trainshed. Other needs include the repair and extension of the platform, installation of high-power station

lighting, repaving of the two parking lots, and construction of a lighted Amtrak sign. (Amtrak will probably soon start to install such lighted plexiglas signs in the fashion of signs seen in tank stations.)

The handsome station building, a Mediterranean-style structure with an elaborately carved vault, is in good condition and well capable of serving a considerably larger ridership. Amtrak's ticket office, which is actually a jerry-built cubbyhole designed to physically separate passenger activities from the SP's freight billing, has already proven itself to be quite inadequate to handle this summer's business. Therefore, it seems likely that Amtrak will move back into the former spacious ticket office once arrangements have been made for SP to move its freight billing to another building.

(Ed. note: The latest word from Amtrak--its press release of August 24--gave no prediction of when service to Mexico would begin. It said that "Amtrak is currently seeking coordination of schedules and operations with the Mexican National Railway...")

LETTERS

What an embarrassment!! I talked two friends into returning from Los Angeles to St. Louis via Amtrak. Neither had ridden a train for years. They had reservations for two roomettes in the through L.A.-N.Y. car.

When I picked them up yesterday, I had to face two disillusioned people. Their car (SF 10/6 in the 9000 series) had inoperative air conditioning all the way. It was inoperative when they boarded at L.A. and yet they let the car depart in that condition. Moreover, at 11pm the second night the electricity went--no lights, no fan. For this they paid an extra fare even.

Let's face it!!! New equipment must be ordered immediately if Amtrak has any hope of success.

Rev. Robert E. Lampert

Normandy, Mo.

The photographers are never around when... Labor Day, San Diego station, draped with people, festooned with people, people, people everywhere--a half hour before train time 4pm. A little train parked outside with an added coach. It could have run express, with the next train alongside doing the locals, the beach crowds upline. But San Diego is not set up for operating, cramped between two grade crossings, no facilities for servicing, for flexibility, for long trains on time...

Robert J. Swan

Long Beach, Calif.

Enclosed is notice of special movement on BN (for Boy Scouts Executive Committee) using Amtrak equipment! When it comes to railfan specials we cannot get equipment but for the right people they will take the Great Dome off the BUILDER?

I observed this train pulling out--at 10 to the second! Two weeks ago when I rode the BUILDER to Minot we sat in the Minneapolis station one hour. Would that the BN would take such care of Amtrak!

A coal train was due thru station about 10pm so BN had it take the freight line thru the Twin Cities, adding 30 minutes to running time. Just so Boy Scout execs wouldn't be disturbed by a coal train passing them.

Thomas Kopriva

Minneapolis, Minn.

EAST COAST REPORT

(continued from page 6)

Despite a 9-minute late departure from L.A. (waiting for SUPER CHIEF passengers), the train was early into every station from Santa Barbara to Oakland; in fact, 18 minutes early at San Luis Obispo. The train was full from Los Angeles to Santa Barbara, but thereafter more riders seemed to detrain at each stop than get on. The Pacific Coast scenery was superb. And the food was good--they even served breakfast, this on a 10:05am departure. And the mighty Southern Pacific had succumbed to Amtrak instructions and actually honored my Rail Travel Card in the diner. The Amtrak hostess, Jill, introduced herself in all the cars, gave out "Tracks are Back" buttons to one and all, and did everything she could to cheer up the passengers and liven up the SP crew. She said there is a hostess almost every day between L.A. and Oakland.

In summary, despite the disasters, I enjoyed the trip. I got three good nights' sleep, once in an Amtrak coach, twice in a ni-level. The employees were generally friendly. There were no instances of employees going out of their way to mistreat passengers as I have observed in the past, but there still is that attitude, "Well, I won't chew you out, but I still don't have to smile." Food service is now standardized nationwide, and it seemed odd to get the same menu on RF&P, Penn Central, Santa Fe and Southern Pacific. Prices are generally lower, and there is enough variety so that I never ate the same thing twice unwillingly. My recommendation is: take an Amtrak trip this fall--it'll be an experience.

MISCELLANY: AMTRAK WILL CONTINUE NEW YORK to Los Angeles thru service via Kansas City after September 10. With the removal of the CHIEF, the cars will run west in the SUPER CHIEF. The NATIONAL LIMITED will remain on its present schedule, resulting in an 8-hour layover in Kansas City. If the NATIONAL were to run west 5 hours later than at present, the layover for L.A. riders and for those changing to the TEXAS CHIEF would be cut. And the Washington-St. Louis-Kansas City coach could be handled on the RILEY/WASHINGTON between Washington and Indianapolis, permitting the discontinuance of the inane tri-weekly one-car Washington section of the NATIONAL; and boosting service to daily at the same time. Wake up, Amtrak! ... SCL city ticket offices remain open at St. Petersburg, Miami Beach and Charleston. The Richmond office was closed in mid-summer, with Amtrak's tour office being moved to Broad St. Station. Some SCL offices are open in the Northeast, but are consolidated with Penn Central's offices generally... The EMPIRE BUILDER and NORTH COAST HIAWATHA operated in separate sections most of the summer between Seattle and Spokane... Amtrak has reduced its station forces at Newport News and at Main St. Station, Richmond. Instead of 2 ticket sellers and a porter or two on duty at any one time, there is now only one man. He sells tickets, answers the phone, announces trains, takes checked baggage to and from the trains, and cleans restrooms and waiting room... Southern Railway steam trips (all with engine 4501 except the Oct. 7 trip): Sept. 17, Winston Salem to Charlotte and return; Sept. 23, 1-way ferry trip Winston Salem to Greeneville, SC; Sept. 24, 1-way Greeneville SC to Atlanta GA; Sept. 30, 1-way Atlanta to Chattanooga; Oct. 7, round trip Sheffield-Huntsville, AL (engine 77); Oct. 14 & 15, Chattanooga to Crossville, TN and return each day; Oct. 21, NRHS, Heart of Dixie Chapter, excursion from Birmingham.

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canadian news letter

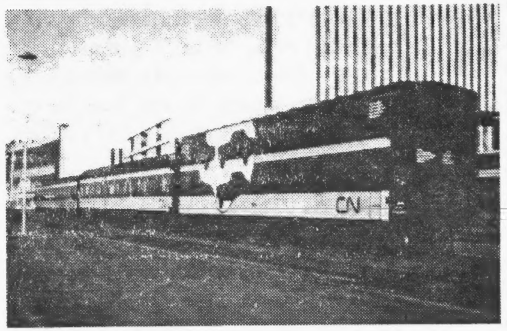
by Gregory Thompson

CN'S PARADOX: THE DAYNITER COACH - Creative and tasteful interior design for railroad passenger equipment is not a lost art in North America. One has only to venture as far as Vancouver or Toronto to find examples of rebuilt ex-American dome cars, heavyweight lounges and parlors. These cars display contemporary interior designs, which compare favorably to the best that European railroads have to offer. They are a refreshing contrast to the faded and threadbare early-1950's interiors of U.S. equipment.

The organization responsible for such high quality work is, of course, Canadian National. Since the early 1960's, CN has exhibited a striking awareness of the part which image can play in luring passengers back to the rails. CN has preoccupied itself with interior decoration since that time. The mammoth pro-passenger effort of the 1960's waned several years ago, but CN's preoccupation with passenger equipment interiors (and total design as well, as witness LRC and Turbo) continues.

CN's latest, and perhaps greatest, triumph of interior decoration is the Dayniter coach. However, the Dayniter is a paradox. It not only embodies the best which CN can do; it may embody the worse as well. The Dayniter may herald a significant deterioration of transcontinental passenger services.

Eight or ten Dayniters are now in operation. Each contains 52 high-backed, contoured reclining seats (compared to 76 seats in regular CN transcontinental coaches). The seats are spaced on widely-separated centers, allowing almost unlimited leg room. Because of either wide spacing or seat design, the Dayniter seems to offer more leg



CN public display at Edmonton station, June 18: (left to right) Dayniter coach 5702, club-lounge "Cordial," and auto-car 9500. Note the painted design on the side of the auto carrier depicting the contents. All photos by the author.

room than the 45-seat Sunset or Shasta coaches of the Southern Pacific, or the Chief coaches of the Santa Fe. The Dayniter seats contain leg rests, which are not found on other CN coach seats. Large wood-textured, chrome-trimmed trays fold out from the backs of the seats, airline style. However, the trays are much larger than airline trays and do not exhibit their flimsy plastic look.

Other details include carpeting and lighting design. Carpeting not only covers the floor, but the bulk heads and parts of the walls and ceiling as well. Its reddish-purple hue blends well with gray, ivory, chrome and dark brown found on the seats and other fixtures. Main coach lighting is from incandescent bulbs shining thru a wood-like plastic lattice diffuser running the length of the coach compartment. Individual reading lamps provide additional light.

The overall feeling one gets from the Dayniter is that of warmth, comfort and quality. This car is not the product of a mere cosmetic job or half-baked effort. It is a well-executed triumph in interior design.

However, the Dayniter may present ominous indications for the future. Does the Dayniter represent a second, higher class of coach travel designed to separate "respectable" coach passengers from the youth crowd so prevalent in the regular coaches, or is the Dayniter in fact designed as a sleeping car substitute? Indications point to the latter use as that for which the Dayniter has been designed, and if so, it could result in a disaster for Canadian transcontinental train patronage. As nice as the Dayniter is, it probably would not be a satisfactory substitute for passengers presently riding in sections, roomettes or bedrooms.

It is quite obvious that the Dayniter is already being used to replace the dormette sleeper on CN 1 and 2. One car operates on each train, immediately behind the baggage cars, in front of the 3 regular coaches. The dormette is regularly absent

Interior of CN Sceneramic Dome "Qu'Apelle," built in 1952 for the Milwaukee and refurbished sometime after 1967. Below: "Bon Voyage" club-lounge; built 1920, modernized 1964. Both seen on CN #2 between Jasper & Edmonton, Aug. 12, 1970.

from the consist of CN 1 and 2.

Will the Dayniter be used to replace more than the dormette? Under Canadian law, CN applied for discontinuance of the SUPER CONTINENTAL. As expected, the Canadian Transport Commission ordered the train continued, and according to law, began paying 80% of the claimed $14 million (based on 1969 figures, according to the press). However, the CTC looked closely at the operation of the train and concluded that sleeping car and dining

services are luxuries which are not public necessities. It then ordered that sleeping and dining car accounts be kept separate from those for the general operation of the train, and furthermore, that these accounts would receive no subsidy. One Ottawa observer reports that CN, to its credit, is vigorously resisting the full implications of the order. Still, one cannot help but wonder whether the Dayniter's appearance at a time when sleeping car rates could potentially sky-rocket is more than a coincidence. One must also remember that the CTC has ordered CN and CP to reach mutual agreement on joint operation of transcontinental services. With different pricing procedures and philosophies toward passenger service between the two, this arrangement could not result in other than a major degradation of CN service.

Urban-Suburban Transit

BART WILL GET UNDERWAY ON TIME

September 11 will be past when you read these lines, and if BART predictions are correct, paying passengers will have made their first rides on the portion of the Bay Area system running between MacArthur Station in Oakland and Fremont, Calif. The Oakland Tribune (address: Tribune Tower, Oakland, Calif.) is preparing a special collector's item edition Sunday Sept. 10, which could probably be obtained by mail (newsstand price is 35¢).

Newsmen on Sept. 3 had a preview run that resulted in a small accident. A fire door in a subway near Lake Merritt station became unlatched and swung open, striking a passing BART car twice with slight damage and minor injury to one passenger.

END OF CHICAGO'S FAMOUS LOOP IN SIGHT

The Dept. of Transportation announced in August a $5.8 million grant to design a subway system for downtown Chicago. It appears that the 75-year-old elevated Loop system of electric trains will be eliminated with development of the proposed mass transit system. The DOT is still considering a request for $497 million to cover two-thirds of the construction cost of the full project.

TRANSIT PLANS FOR SEATTLE

Seattle citizens will vote Sept. 19 on two different measures to change that city's transit system. One would raise sales tax to buy a privately-owned suburban bus system and consolidate it with the city's present system to form a regional network of buses. The other opposing measure calls for a return to a city network of mostly electric trolley bus operation. A group called COMET--Committee for the Modernization of Electric Transportation, got signatures to place the proposal on the ballot. In 1964 a similar proposal was defeated by voters.

LARGEST PASSENGER CAR ORDER IN HISTORY IS PLACED

Pullman-Standard will soon begin construction of 752 new subway cars for New York City, with the air-conditioned cars to be delivered starting late in 1973. It was said to be the largest order for rail cars ever placed in the U.S., with NY paying one third and the federal government the remainder. Total cost is over $200 million.

HIGH-SPEED TRAINS IN ILLINOIS ARE PROPOSED

The Illinois state Transportation Dept. released a study Aug. 17 that calls for a new high-speed train service between Chicago and Rockford. Present Amtrak service does not meet the needs of intercity riders in the state, the report said. The proposed service might have connections to Beloit, Wisc. The report also recommended better equipment and facilities on the Rock Island's routes; another Chicago-Champaign roundtrip; schedule changes on the Chicago-Springfield-St. Louis route; and improved service between Chicago, Galesburg and Iowa border points.

The Chicago Sun-Times reported Aug. 18 that Illinois Governor Ogilvie's budget bureau had vetoed a proposed third round-trip train in the Chicago-St. Louis "corridor" even tho state transportation experts had recommended it earlier.

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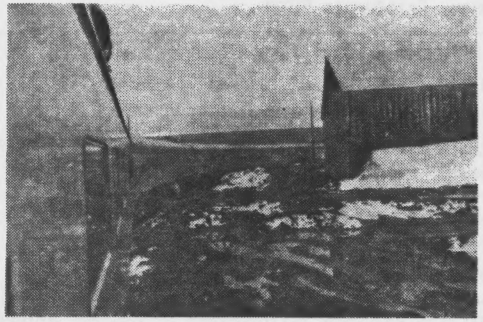

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